



**EAGLE MOUNTAIN  
SAGINAW ISD**

*Fostering a Culture of Excellence*

# **Advanced Academic Programs Handbook**

Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District  
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[Advanced Academics](#)

EMS ISD

The Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies.

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## Portrait of a Gifted EMS ISD Graduate

The mission of Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District is to “foster a culture of excellence that instills a passion for a lifetime of continuous achievement in every student.” Aspire 2025 specifies an objective which reinforces the Department of Advanced Academics work with gifted students, namely to, “create a system of support to maximize student potential,” through providing, “student-centered inquiry, and problem-based instruction” and a “learning culture that inspires innovation and excellence.” As we seek to improve and grow programs for Gifted and Talented (GT) students, our aim is to find and develop potential to its highest possible level. By removing the ceiling on what is possible and creating systems without barriers on talent development, we can validate and affirm these students by helping to nurture and cultivate their gifts into demonstrable talent.

When students are identified in elementary as needing gifted services, our goal is to cultivate interest with an idea, topic, or content area by helping them to discover where their passion and abilities meet. When gifted learners move to middle school, stakeholders should help the students to continue to develop a self-awareness and personal identity as they seek to focus their learning and academic passions. Finally, as students matriculate to high school, EMS ISD teachers and leaders should facilitate opportunities for high level achievement and performance, specialization, and complexity of ideas and skills.

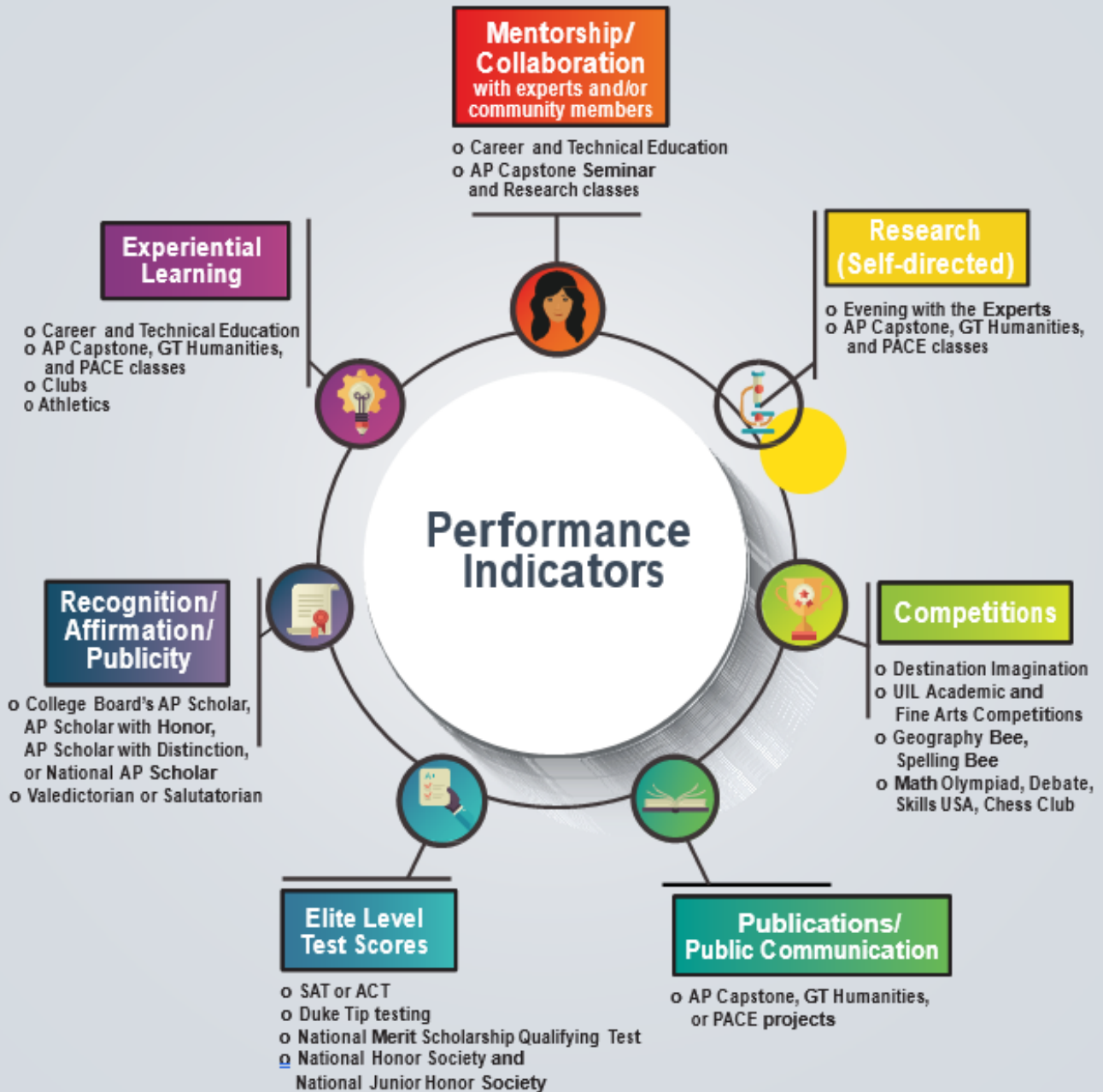
For two years, beginning in 2017, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD Gifted and Talented Vision Team, comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, along with Dr. Todd Kettler, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at Baylor University, created the following performance indicators as evidence for evaluating the degree to which gifted learners develop and realize their potential by the time they graduate high school:

- Experiential Learning
- Mentorship/Collaboration
- Self-Directed Research
- Competitions
- Publications/Public Communication
- Elite Level Test Scores
- Recognition/Affirmation/Publicity

See graphic on next page for full details.



# Portrait of a Gifted EMS ISD Graduate



**Mission Statements:****Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD Mission Statement**

The mission of Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District is to foster a **culture of excellence** that instills a **passion for a lifetime of continuous achievement** in every student.

**PACE (Plan of Action for Curriculum Enrichment)**

The mission of the EMS ISD Gifted and Talented/PACE program is to provide an array of educational experiences that challenge students to reach their potential. The social, emotional, and academic needs of each student are met in a risk-free environment that promotes creative/critical thinking and problem solving.

**Goals and Objectives:**

There are certain lifelong learning skills that should be a part of every gifted student's school program. Gifted students should develop advanced research and study skills. They should be able to think critically and creatively about problems that are presented to them. They should possess the poise and understanding of group dynamics that will make them effective leaders in the future, and they should recognize the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

This does not mean that research and personal study skills, critical and creative thinking ability, and leadership skills are the exclusive domain of gifted students. Gifted students, however, tend to master the essential knowledge and skills more quickly than most students. Because of this, they should be permitted to extend their education as far and as completely as possible in areas of importance to their development.

**PACE teachers, parents, and students strive to:**

- Maximize academic and social potential through an enriched and supportive environment
- Develop critical and creative thinking
- Build research skills through independent study
- Prepare for leadership by refining communication skills
- Cultivate a feeling of self-worth and confidence

**AP/Advanced programs can:**

- Provide an opportunity to take a college-level course in an area of the student's special interest;
- Provide college credits and/or placement at many colleges and universities for successfully completing an AP examination;
- Develop the analytical and study skills and habits students will need in college;
- Bolster the student's academic self-confidence that they can meet college requirements;
- Motivate students to attempt more challenging courses; and
- Reduce college costs and time in order to obtain a degree.

**AP Capstone:**

AP Capstone allows students to master inquiry and research skills through training and independent work. Further, students will:

- Earn credit for college through advocacy and demonstration of mastery.
- Be trained to research and work like a Senior-level college student.
- Earn additional scholarship opportunities when they complete the Capstone program.
- Earn a College Board Diploma.
- Gain an advantage in applying for college.

**Definitions:****Advanced (Advanced is the title replacing Pre-AP.)**

Pre-AP is the term that EMS ISD used to describe these classes prior to the 2021-2022 school year. Advanced is the term that describes classes that will help students prepare for AP classes. Advanced classes are based on the premises that all students can perform at rigorous academic levels as reflected in challenging curriculum and instruction and that every student can be prepared for higher intellectual engagement by starting the development of skills and acquisition of knowledge as early as possible. Ultimately, the goal of Advanced courses at the middle and high school levels is to ensure that students develop the skills, habits of mind, and concepts they need to succeed at the next level, in AP courses and in college.

**AP**

AP, Advanced Placement program, is a registered trademark of the College Board, a non-profit membership association dedicated to preparing, inspiring, and connecting students to college and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board is composed of thousands of schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations, and serves millions of students and their parents. Among its best-known programs are SAT, PSAT, and Advanced Placement program.

**AP Capstone**

AP Capstone™ is a diploma program from the College Board. It's based on two yearlong AP courses: AP Seminar and AP Research. Rather than teaching subject-specific content, these courses develop students' skills in research, analysis, evidence-based arguments, collaboration, writing, and presenting. Students who complete the two-year program can earn one of two different AP Capstone awards, which are valued by colleges across the United States and around the world.

**GT**

GT is an acronym that represents Gifted and Talented.

**GEMSS**

The group, Gifted Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Students (GEMSS), is a Kindergarten through 12th-grade district-wide advocacy group for the gifted and talented students of Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD. GEMSS is focused on providing networking, support, information and leveraging resources for students, parents, teachers, and administrators in Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD. For more information about GEMSS, please click on the links under Advanced Academics to access the GEMSS membership application or here: [GEMSS](#).

## Gifted and Talented Student

"Gifted and talented student" means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area possesses an unusual capacity for leadership or excels in a specific academic field. (Education Code 29.121) Gifted students require educational experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Students shall be identified through the use of multiple criteria as specified by the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District. The district recognizes that students identified as gifted and talented can come from all races, socioeconomic groups, geographical locales, and environments.

## Humanities

"Humanities is a way of thinking about what is human, including our diverse histories, values, ideas, language, dreams, and imaginations. Humanities illuminate how people process and document the human experience, and thus shape cultures, communities, and individuals through asking who we are and what do our lives mean." Dr. Todd Kettler, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology, Baylor University.

## PACE (Plan of Action for Curriculum Enrichment)

PACE is an acronym that represents Plan of Action for Curriculum Enrichment. PACE is the name of EMS ISD's elementary GT program.

## TAGT

Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) is a group for teachers and parents to find out more information about being gifted and talented. Their website is here: [TAGT](#).

## History and Goal of Texas Gifted from TEA:

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the originator of the Texas State Plan (State Plan) for the education of Gifted/Talented Students revised in 2006 and 2019. Here is a link for the State Plan (scroll down): [Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted Students](#).

The State Plan contains the goals and history of G/T:

In 1977, the Texas Legislature passed its first legislation concerning the education of gifted/talented (G/T) students. In 1979, state funds for providing services to G/T children were made available, but providing such services was optional for school districts. In 1987, the Texas Legislature mandated that all school districts must identify and serve G/T students at all grade levels. In 1990, the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (State Plan) was adopted by the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) that included a commitment to high-level learning opportunities for G/T learners expressed in the following goal:

**STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS** Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented



students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature introduced Rider 69 which spurred the initial development and ongoing refinement of the Texas Performance Standards Project for Gifted/Talented Students (TPSP) as a vehicle through which districts might address the stated goal. With the TPSP and ongoing research to inform and improve practice, Texas educators are committed to meeting the unique needs of G/T students and to expanding the ways to do so. To learn more about programs and resources for G/T education in Texas visit the Texas Education Agency (TEA) G/T website at: [GT Resources](#), contact a local Texas public school district or regional education service center (ESC), or email TEA at [gted@tea.texas.gov](mailto:gted@tea.texas.gov).

Pursuant to Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), the State Plan forms the basis of G/T standards of services into accountability and exemplary. The plan offers an outline for services without prohibitive regulation. Districts are accountable for services as described in the State Plan where performance measures are included for six aspects of G/T service design. The accountability standards reflect actions required in state law and/or SBOE rule. Many districts, in collaboration with their communities, will provide more comprehensive services incorporating research-based best practices for G/T learners.

To offer some guidance to those districts and campuses, standards for “exemplary” performance are included in the plan and provide viable targets that local district educators seeking excellence, both for their district and for their students, may strive to attain.

### **Advanced Academic Special Events:**

All students involved in the PACE program, GT Humanities, and AP Capstone will be responsible for creating a presentation for Evening with the Experts which is where students will present to the families and community of EMS ISD. The night, Evening with the Experts, will be held late in the spring each year.

### **Program Design:**

The PACE Program at Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District offers instruction and opportunities for students identified by their general intellectual ability. GT students at every level have the opportunity to work together as a group, with other students, and to work independently. Services are available during the school day and throughout the school year. Out of school options are also available to GT students. Some of these extracurricular activities may include: Duke Talent Search, University Interscholastic League Academic Contests, Junior National Honor Society, National Honor Society, Math Olympiad, Destination Imagination, and various specialized organizations.

All PACE Specialists, GT Humanities teachers, and AP Capstone teachers are trained to provide instruction that will lead to completion of projects that require complex thinking, problem solving, and advanced learning. The use of a variety of organizational patterns will effectively lead to maximizing the potential of gifted and talented students.

## Elementary Grades

According to TEA mandates, programming options must enable identified G/T students to work together as a group, work with other students, and to work independently. As a result, these students are required to attend PACE sessions during their assigned times and should not be prevented from attending.

\*Teachers who will be working with GT students in the homeroom classes are required to have 30 hours of GT training plus a 6-hour update each year. This applies to the K-1 teachers, where the GT students are primarily served in the classrooms, and to the 2<sup>nd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers that have GT clusters of students.

<p>K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade</p>	<p>Kindergarten students are offered the opportunity to be nominated for PACE services in the fall semester. First grade students will be eligible for nomination in the spring semester. All K-1 teachers are required to complete 30 hours of GT training to serve the needs of the identified students in the regular classroom.</p> <p>Kindergarten and first grade students will be served in the regular classroom, with PACE teachers scheduling pull-out lessons as time allows. During these lessons the students will participate in extension activities from problem-solving and the four core areas: math, science, social studies, and ELAR.</p>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade</p>	<p>All identified 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders are served through a 2-hour a week pull-out program. Open nominations are accepted in the spring semester for the following school year. Teachers and parents will be notified when the nomination process is open and when the testing will take place. Students new to the district may be nominated at the beginning of the school year.</p> <p>PACE curriculum at the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade level is designed to allow for in-depth exploration of topics and issues that require high-level thinking. Identified gifted learners will use a variety of approaches to solve problems, develop thoughtful questions, plan, organize, evaluate and present solutions. Divergent thinking will be used to see things in new and different ways focusing on fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration to generate and present ideas. The students are also encouraged to pursue areas of interest through guided and independent research leading to the development of advanced-level products. Curriculum will also address social &amp; emotional needs of gifted learners. Although students are responsible for the content covered in the general classroom during pullout sessions, they are not required to make up assignments missed while attending PACE. Students should not have additional homework or stay in from recess for assignments missed during PACE participation.</p> <p>The GT students are clustered in groups of 5-10 in the homeroom classes. This gives the GT students opportunities during the week to work with other GT students in a flexible setting. Homeroom teachers use formative assessments to make decisions about grouping in their classroom.</p>

## Secondary Grades

According to TEA mandates, programming options must enable identified G/T students to work together as a group, work with other students, and to work independently.

\*Teachers who will be working with GT students are required to have 30 hours of GT training plus a 6-hour update each year. This applies to the GT Humanities, Advanced, and AP teachers, where the GT students are primarily served in the classrooms, and to the teachers that have GT clusters of students.

<p>6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades</p>	<p>Advanced and gifted and talented sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students will meet in a daily GT Humanities class in which they will receive an academic grade. The Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD Gifted and Talented Curriculum, as well as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, will be followed. These classes are designed to meet the needs of advanced and GT students who have demonstrated above-average ability in the following two areas of giftedness as defined by the Texas State Plan for the Gifted: 1) high general-intellectual ability; and, 2) creative and productive thinking. These classes also assist in preparing students for the challenges offered by the Advanced Placement program through sustained habits necessary for success in the College Board’s AP Program. Students in GT Humanities will pursue a concept that will be based as a conceptual question for each unit in order to solve a real-world problem by developing a real-world project. These projects will entail both independent research and collaborative problem solving. Products will be presented in various forms for authentic audiences. Enhanced classes in the four core academic areas (Advanced) are also available to these students. The GT Humanities teacher is available to assist any classroom teacher with enrichment activities to support the GT learner. Students will need to take the SAT or ACT test in high school. More about course offerings continue after this page.</p>
<p>9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Grades</p>	<p>The high school GT student will have the opportunity to enroll in Advanced, AP (Advanced Placement), Dual Credit or OnRamps courses. The high school guidance office is available to assist GT students with any needs or special situations, including enrollment questions and applying for scholarships. A student may earn a <b><u>distinguished level of achievement</u></b> through successful completion of the Foundation High School Program and of at least one endorsement required by the Texas Education Code (TEC), §28.025(b-15). Endorsements require students to earn four credits in science and four credits in mathematics, including Algebra II. More about course offerings continue after this page.</p>

**Advanced or AP**

The Advanced and AP programs are academic programs that allow students to engage in college-level work while in high school and demonstrate their achievement through successful completion of national examinations. The Advanced and AP teachers will complete the state required training and/or the College Board Advanced Placement training as well as training in the nature and needs, identification and assessment, and differentiation of gifted students. In order to remain active in GT, high school students should enroll in at least one Advanced or Advanced Placement (AP) course each year. AP Capstone has two classes AP Seminar and AP Research. AP Seminar is offered in tenth to twelfth grades and AP Research is offered in eleventh and twelfth grades. By taking AP Exams, students may earn [AP Scholar Awards](#), academic distinctions that recognize students who demonstrate college-level achievement through AP courses and exams. According to the National Center for Educational Accountability, an AP Exam grade and a grade of 3 or higher is a strong predictor of a student’s ability to persist in college and earn a bachelor’s degree.

AP Examination Grades are equivalent to grades in the comparable college course as follows:

- Exam Score of 5/Extremely Well Qualified - A Grades in the comparable college course
- Exam Score of 4/Well Qualified - Grades of A-, B+, and B in the comparable college course
- Exam Score of 3/Qualified - Grades of B-, C+, and C in the comparable college course
- Exam Score of 2/Possibly Qualified
- Exam Score of 1/No Recommendation

The College Board and the American Council on Education recommend acceptance of 3’s for credit and standing purposes. However, each college and university sets its own [AP policy](#).

**In EMS ISD, all students who elect to take an AP course are expected to take the national AP Exam administered by the College Board in May. The cost of the test is the responsibility of the student.**

Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD offers the following AP courses:

English Language & Composition	Statistics	Human Geography	Spanish Language	Computer Science
English Literature & Composition	Biology	United States History	Spanish Literature	Computer Science Principles
Capstone Seminar	Chemistry	World History	Art – Studio Art	
Capstone Research	Physics 1	European History	Art – 2-D Design	
Calculus AB	Physics 2	Psychology	Art – 3-D Design	
Calculus BC	Environmental Science	French Language	Art History	
Macroeconomics	United States Government & Politics	German Language	Music Theory	

EMS ISD is not required to offer an AP exam if the District does not have the corresponding course. Our priority is to help the student.

- If the test does not require an additional proctor, or district supports, and can be taken with other exams that students are taking, we will provide the opportunity for the student.
- If the student needs to take a test that the District is unable to support, the campus will work with the Director of CCMR to set a test in another district that offers the exam.

**Dual Credit**

Dual Credit courses are college courses that also count toward high school requirements. Upon successful completion of the course with a score of 70 or higher, the student earns both college credit and high school credit for the course. Dual Credit courses may be taught by a high school teacher with appropriate credentials and by regular college faculty via the internet. Courses offered for dual credit must provide advanced academic instruction that allows for mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the appropriate high school course and also goes into greater depth than those TEKS. Students enrolling in TCC dual credit courses that are taught at the high schools are responsible for tuition, textbooks, and fees. Additionally, students may take on-line dual credit courses with prior approval. Students are responsible for tuition, textbooks and materials. Dual credit, in most cases, transfers to any public college or university, provided students receive a grade of 2.0 or higher (C).

**For more information on graduation plans and high school courses, please see this year's EMS ISD Course Description Handbook. [Handbook](#)**

Please see the Dual Credit Handbook for a side-by-side comparison of AP to Dual Credit. [Handbook](#)

**On Ramps**

On Ramps is a dual-enrollment program where the student earns credit for both college classes, through University of Texas, and high school credit. College credit earned transfers to any university. Please see, [OnRamps](#), for more information about this program.

**Middle and High School:****Requirement of services provided**

The following steps need to be taken by the school's CCRS Counselor (College and Career Readiness Specialist), or GT Campus Coordinator:

1. Run report in Skyward of GT student schedules.
2. Ensure students are in at least one Advanced or AP course.
3. If student is not in at least one Advanced or AP course, then make contact with parents to encourage student to take an Advanced or AP course.
4. If the decision is made to not take at least one Advanced or AP course, then the student must enter into furlough (if not already on a furlough) or exit (if currently on a furlough but is now entering year 2 of not taking any Advanced or AP classes) the GT program.

**Cumulative folders**

The student GT portion of cumulative folder needs to be kept with the cumulative files, or with the CCRS/ GT Campus Coordinator in a secure location. An orange spacer will need to be placed with cumulative folder anytime the folder is removed. The CCRS/GT Campus Coordinator must ensure every student has a GT Acceptance of Service in the folder by the October snapshot date. The matrix of student scores should also be included. Files are to be maintained at each student's campus and moved as the student progresses to the next campus.

**Clustering in Elementary and Secondary classes:**

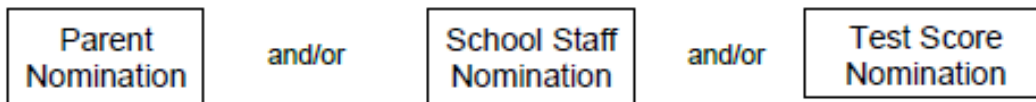
When assigning students to homeroom classes, it is recommended that gifted students be clustered in groups of 5 or more to allow for these students to serve as a resource to each other. This recommendation is for any identified Gifted and Talented student in grades K to 5 in their homeroom classes, core content classes in middle school, and Advanced and AP classes into high school. The only exception to this is during the year that the student is being identified as GT.

Students who have been placed in the PACE program are expected to attend PACE classes. Attendance in PACE is not optional. If a classroom assignment is missed in the regular class while the student is attending PACE, that student should not be expected to make it up or do it as homework. The student's grades should be averaged without penalty for missing assignments while in PACE. PACE students will receive a PACE progress report. The PACE teacher will be available to assist any classroom teacher with enrichment activities.

**Identification:**

## Identification Procedure For Gifted/Talented Education

### Nomination



### Screening

At least four criteria gathered by committee, some objective, some subjective. These should be from several sources.

### Selection

Selection Committee makes decisions for placement based on test scores and observations.

Not accepted at this time

Accepted to program

Parent permission to participate

Parent may decline program.

Exit or Furlough or Continue

Committee decision; parents informed prior to exit

Detailed requirements are on the next pages.

### **Nomination:**

Identification of students is conducted, not to label students as gifted, but rather to locate students who have specific needs which can be more effectively met through differentiated instruction in the PACE program. Nominations are inclusive and involve any student who meets the qualifications, no matter the background, educational experience, or language spoken. Students may test only once in a twelve-month testing period.

The identification and selection of students for participation in the program is determined by a three-step process: (1) nomination, (2) screening, and (3) selection. The final placement decision is made by the Selection Committee.

Nominations may come from faculty/staff, parents, community members, or at the secondary level, by self-nomination. Please refer to the PACE website for the nomination form and testing windows. Go to [Gifted and Talented Services](#).

Persons nominating students must complete a general Nomination Form and submit it to the school office. This will begin the process of data collection from various sources regarding the child's ability and potential. After the referral is received at the campus, a packet of information will be sent to the parent. Concerns or inquiries regarding GT should be addressed to the campus specialists/teachers in grades kindergarten - fifth and with the designated GT contact person or counselor at the middle and high school campuses.

If EMS ISD's GT services do not meet a student's needs, a student may be re-nominated and be re-tested after a period of one year.

### **Elementary:**

At the elementary level, testing is available once a year in the spring. Please refer to the EMS ISD website for exact dates and deadlines. The campus PACE teacher will accept nominations at any time. Nominations will be held until the testing window occurs for the grade level. Students identified as gifted from a school district in which they are transferring will test during the first six-week period.

All second-grade students are considered for assessment with a universal screener by the PACE program. Kindergarten students will be involved in assessment activities conducted by the PACE teacher.

### **Secondary:**

Open nominations will be accepted during the first week in November (both middle school and high school), the first week in February (middle school), and the first week of March (high school). Parents, school personnel, community members, or the student by self-nomination may nominate the student for GT testing.

1. The GT Parent Nomination Form will be available on the EMS ISD website, student's house offices at the high schools, and in the front office at the middle schools.
2. Middle School forms will be turned in to the front office. High School forms will be turned in to student's house office, in College & Career Centers, or emailed directly to CCRS.
3. CCRS or GT Campus Coordinator will collect all forms and contact the Coordinator for Advanced Academics.



Students identified as gifted from school districts in which they are transferring will test during the first six-week period. Please refer to the Advanced Academic [webpage](#) for exact dates and deadlines.

### **Screening:**

The following qualitative and quantitative instruments may be used in the screening process for referred students in grades kindergarten through twelve:

- Standardized abilities test
- Standardized achievement test
- Parent and Teacher observations
- Other documentation may be considered as needed

Parental or custodial permission is required before any tests are administered. All students are assessed in languages they understand or with non-verbal based tests. All populations of the district have access to assessment; and if identified, services offered as part of the program for gifted students. Students may only be tested once per calendar year.

### **Selection:**

After the above instruments have been administered and scored, each student's scores will be recorded on a PACE Program Student Identification Matrix.

The criteria for placement for students in kindergarten through twelve are based on preponderance of the evidence found.

	District Line
1. Parent Inventory	90
2. Teacher Inventory	85
4. Intelligence/Abilities Test	122
5. Achievement Test	89% and higher

The Selection Committee will have the option of reviewing any student's profile for special consideration for program placement. Parents will then be informed by the PACE teacher. Please see the district website/PACE Forms for deadlines.

### **Committees:**

A Screening Committee, comprised of PACE teachers, will meet to look at the results of each testing session. They will make recommendations, including advocacy concerns, to the Selection Committee. All members will have training in the nature and needs of gifted children.

There will be a Selection Committee to review all nominations, transfers tested for placement into the program, and appeals. The committee will convene after receiving recommendations from the Screening Committee. All members will have training in the nature and needs of gifted children.

An Advisory Committee will meet as needed to provide support and assistance to the GT Program regarding program planning, improvement, and visioning work. Membership shall include, but not be

limited to, the GT Coordinator, PACE teachers, GT Humanities teachers, AP Capstone teachers, parents of GT students, administrators, classroom teachers, counselors, and community members.

### **Appeals of Placement Decisions:**

The following steps are to be followed in filing an appeal regarding a decision of the Selection Committee:

#### **Step 1: Level 1 – Part One**

A parent may request a conference with the student's building principal within fifteen business days of receiving the selection decision. Upon the request, either the GT teacher or the campus administrator will send the parent the Appeal form. The top half of the form which contains the parent and student signatures and the reasons for the appeal needs to be filled out prior to the conference. A conference where the GT teacher (District Selection Committee member) and principal go over the student matrix and answer any questions must be scheduled within ten business days of the parent requested conference. The bottom half of the appeal form should be filled out during the conference. Any subsequent appeals shall be made in accordance with FNG(LOCAL) beginning at Level Two. (EHBB(LOCAL))

#### **Step 2: Level 1 – Part Two**

- If the parent is not satisfied with the decision made in Level 1 – Part One, the parent will forward the District Appeal form to the GT Coordinator within 10 business days of the Step 1: Level 1 – Part One Conference.
- The appeal is presented to the District Selection Committee by the GT Coordinator at the next committee meeting. The committee will meet periodically throughout the school year. Written records of the results of the meeting will be placed in the student's GT folder and will be mailed to the parent immediately following the meeting.

#### **Step 3: Level 2 - Grievance**

- If the parent is still not satisfied, the parent may initiate a grievance through the office of the Superintendent. (FNG(LOCAL))

### **Probation:**

If the GT teacher believes that program participation is not meeting a student's needs, the student may be placed on probation for a set period of time. If at the end of that probationary period the student is still not making the appropriate gains, a meeting will be held to discuss exiting that student. During the probation period, the student will stay in the course.

### **Furloughs:**

A parent or student may request a furlough from GT services for up to one school year when extenuating circumstances occur (i.e. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP), personal reasons, illness, etc.). Parental permission is required for the furlough to be in effect. The furlough will usually

last for the remainder of the school year. The student will automatically be re-enrolled in GT services when the time of the furlough has elapsed. Typically, a student may have only one furlough throughout their school career, unless the Screening Committee determines that it would be in the best educational interest of the student to grant a subsequent furlough due to extreme circumstances.

If in middle or high school, the student is not taking either an Advanced, AP, or GT Humanities class, the following occurs:

- 1 – The CCRS, Counselor, or GT Campus Coordinator, will contact the parent.
- 2 – The GT Furlough form will be completed.
- 3 – Documentation will be kept in the cumulative folder.

### **Exiting (PACE):**

Exiting from GT services will only occur when continued placement would not be the most appropriate educational placement for a student. A parent or a student may also request exiting from the program. Educational, psychological, and personal reasons will be considered. An exited student may not reapply for admission until one full year has expired. At that time, the student will be required to go through the nomination process and requalify for the program.

### **Exiting (GT Humanities, Advanced, AP):**

**Advanced/AP schedule change requests after the add/drop date of June 15 are subject to the following process:**

- Change requests for exiting of Advanced/AP courses will not be considered before the 10<sup>th</sup> instructional day of the course to allow students time to work with the teacher and adjust to curriculum requirements.
- Requests to exit an Advanced/AP course will be considered between the end of the first 10 instructional days and the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> six weeks of a course for year-long classes. Second semester changes will be only considered for semester long AP courses, such as AP Economics or AP Government. Students need to turn in a request form after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of instruction and prior to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks. A student must turn in a written request providing a valid explanation for the schedule change request to his/her counselor. The request must be signed by a parent or guardian.
- Before enacting the process to exit, the reason for the schedule change, in conjunction with the student's past academic history, absences, and use of tutorials and interventions will be reviewed.
- A conference to include the student, teacher, counselor, administrator or designee, and parent will be held once the written request is received and reviewed. Options to be discussed at the conference include:
  - developing a plan for the improvement of the student's performance that includes alternative instructional strategies, student attendance, student effort, student utilization of tutorials and other interventions, and specific target dates for progress reports to student and parent;

**or**

- exiting the student from the course and placing the student in another appropriate course if the student's past academic history and the committee assessment indicate the student does not have the skills to be successful in the course and the student was inappropriately placed in the course.
- If necessary, the GT Exit Form will be completed during the conference.
- Documentation will be kept in the cumulative folder.

**Unacceptable reasons for requesting a schedule change from an Advanced/AP course include but are not limited to:**

- Student wants a different teacher.
- Student wants a different lunch.
- Student wants to be with friends.
- Student wants to change a class because she/she does not want to do the class work or has not done reading / required work.
- Student signed up for the class because he/she wanted to, but wants out of the class since he/she doesn't need the class in order to graduate.
- Student is not making an A or B in the course.
- Student is concerned about GPA.

**Transfer Students:**

Students transferring to the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District from a gifted and talented program at their previous school will be assessed to determine if placement into GT services would be beneficial. An EMS ISD GT teacher will assess all transfer students after notification of enrollment. Information required from previous schools includes qualitative data showing placement into their gifted program and the years served in the program. Transfer students must meet the criteria set by the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District's Gifted and Talented Program. If the district criteria are not met, the student will not be placed into GT services. Transfers from campus to campus within EMS ISD will continue their prior GT Services placement. The GT placement of children from military families is automatically honored. (FDD (LEGAL))

**Reassessment:**

Students in Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD will be assessed upon initial nomination for GT services. Students will not be reassessed for continuation of services. Students will be reassessed if they exit from GT services and then one year after the exit wish to be re-nominated for GT Services.

**Program Evaluation:**

Annual program evaluation activities are conducted for the purpose of continual program improvement. This includes but is not limited to PACE/GT Humanities/AP Capstone staff input, student surveys, parent surveys, principal surveys and EMS ISD Advisory Committee input.

**Curriculum:**

A scope and sequence is followed that illustrates the target concepts and skills which are taught through activities designed for gifted students in grades K-12. A differentiated curriculum that emphasizes all four core areas is available in grades K-12; and a continuum of learning experiences is provided that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances. The GT services curriculum focuses on critical and creative thinking skills, higher order thinking skills, in-depth research leading to advanced products and/or performances, and affective skills for the special needs of the gifted children. Curriculum is modified based on annual evaluations.

**Professional Development:**

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the program for gifted students will have a **minimum** of thirty (30) clock hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted students, identification and assessment of gifted students, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students. These teachers will receive a minimum annual update of six hours of gifted professional development. The annual update is due by the last day of school every year. The state GT certification is the preferred criteria. Teachers who provide GT instruction and services and who are without the required training are required to complete the thirty (30) clock hours within one semester of services.

AP (Advanced Placement) teachers will receive 12 hours of GT credit for their APSI (Advanced Placement Summer Institute) coursework. They will also need the following workshops to complete their 30 hours:

- 1 – Identification and Assessment of GT students (6 hours)
- 2 – Nature and Needs of GT students (6 hours)
- 3 – Differentiation for GT students (6 hours)

Administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions will have a minimum of 6 hours of professional development in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

**Acceleration:**

For content acceleration, EMS ISD offers the following opportunities:

**Credit by Exam**

Credit by Exam is testing for a student to demonstrate mastery in a subject or to earn course credit by passing the exam. Credit by Exam is run by EMS ISD's Director for Testing and Programs. More information and testing time periods can be found here: [Credit by Exam](#).

**Math Acceleration**

EMS ISD gives elementary students in grades 3 through 5 this opportunity in math. The testing to be in accelerated math is run by EMS ISD's Director for Testing and Programs. More information and testing time periods can be found at: [Math Acceleration](#).

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED**

From *Raising Champions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented

*This list of general characteristics will help you understand and evaluate your child's gifts and talents. Probably no child has high levels of performance in all of the categories. The more gifted and talented a child is, the more of these traits will show.*

- *Very verbal, asks many questions, uses advanced vocabulary, wants to know why, how, and what about many things (or everything). They surprise you, your friends, or family with the questions asked or the words used.*
- *Imaginative, playful, have an imaginary playmate, daydreams, becomes absorbed in thoughts.*
- *Good memory, learns rapidly, accurately remembers things for a long time.*
- *Has interests in a wide range of topics, wants to know everything about a chosen interest.*
- *Acutely aware of right and wrong, sensitive to others feelings, strong sense of fairness.*
- *Critical of others, but has difficulty accepting criticism; demands unrealistic perfection from self, especially in certain areas.*
- *Displays boundless energy, requires less sleep, is always in motion.*

**Suggestions for Home** (if age appropriate)

Jigsaw Puzzles

Brain Teaser Puzzles, Problem Solver Puzzles and Books

Reference Material/Books

Video Games (great for quick thinking/problem solving/strategic planning, and hand-eye coordination, but **monitored and limited**)

Conversation (high level)

Cause/Effect Toys or Games

**Suggestions for Parents**

Listen to Your Child

Encourage Your Child

Advocate for Your Child

Provide Enrichment Opportunities/Experiences

**Useful Resources for Parents****Books/Magazines**

Games Magazine -- 1-800-425-4600

Survival Guides -- 1-800-735-7323

Raising Champions - TAGT -- 1-512-499-8248

Gifted Child Today and Creative Kids Magazine

[www.mindwareonline.com](http://www.mindwareonline.com)

[www.piecesoflearning.com](http://www.piecesoflearning.com)

[www.awpeller.com](http://www.awpeller.com)

[www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)

**Gifted Organizations**

TAGT 1-512-499-8248

NAGC

[www.txgifted.org](http://www.txgifted.org)

[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

Eagle Mountain - Saginaw ISD Gifted and Talented Program – (817) 847-7793 x.6660  
[lmabry@ems-isd.net](mailto:lmabry@ems-isd.net) or go [Advanced Academics](#). For more gifted educational links, please visit the [GT Services](#) page.

## 20 TIPS FOR NURTURING GIFTED CHILDREN\*

by Bertie Kingore

1. **Appreciate gifted learners as children.** Just as all children do, they need love, friendship, reasonable standards of behavior, responsibility, time management skills, free time, and creative pursuits. They need your involvement in their development of independence. Appreciate them for who they are rather than who they may become.
2. **Interact with families with gifted children.** Gifted children seek interest-mates and intellectual-peers as well as age peers. You may also find solace interacting with another parent who lives with and loves a gifted child.
3. **Recognize how the personal and instructional needs of a gifted child differ from others.** Gifted students require intellectual peers who understand more abstract ideas and get their jokes. They learn best when instruction is at a pace and level that respond to their accelerated readiness to learn.
4. **Appreciate the differences among high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers.** Skim the accompanying chart that compares high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers and ponder which column or combinations of columns best fit your child. Consider discussing the chart with your children to elicit their perceptions.
5. **Understand the developmental crises for gifted students.** Linda Silverman cautions that gifted students experience uneven development, underachievement often related to a lack of curriculum challenge, conflict between achievement and popularity, and difficulty selecting a career due to multipotentiality. For further information: [www.bertiekingore.com](http://www.bertiekingore.com).
6. **Assure your child that being different is okay.** Gifted children can feel disconnected from age peers who interpret so differently. Help them appreciate individual differences in others and themselves. Provide a place where it is safe for children to be themselves.
7. **Be an encourager.** A parent uniquely understands the whole child as you view your child in multiple scenarios over an extended period of time. As an encourager, validate your child's worth and goals as you encourage passions for learning.
8. **Emphasize that what is learned is more important than any grade.** Interact enthusiastically as your child shares school work with you. Rather than focus upon the grade, prompt your child's response with: *Tell me about what you learned doing this? Draw a star by something that you did well or liked doing.*
9. **Be an active listener and elicit children's perceptions.** Strive to understand their messages and feelings rather than too quickly respond to their words. Insure that children know you respect them and are genuinely interested in their information. Power struggles can be deferred with a request for their view instead of a barrage of our answers. *What do you think we can do about this? How do you feel about it? Why do you think that happened?*

10. **Follow their interests and leads in learning situations rather than pressure them with your agenda.** Our goals may not be their goals. Consult them on issues affecting them whenever you believe they understand the consequences.
11. **Talk up to them.** Advanced vocabularies lead to higher comprehension and achievement.
12. **Enjoy music, plays, museums, art, sports, and historical places together and discuss the experience.** These shared cultural experiences give family members warm memories to talk about over the years.
13. **Model life-long learning habits.** Talk about current events and volunteer with your child to help others. Our actions may model more than our words.
14. **Facilitate real-life reading, writing, science, and math experiences.** Get library cards and go to the library together. Enjoy browsing. Help children find good books and materials in the areas in which they express interest. Start at an early age to shop together with a list and a budget, write thank you notes and invitations, and plan the area and plants for a garden. One gifted sixth grader expressed sincere appreciation for geometry skills after working with his father to plot a patio space and cover.
15. **Give books and learning games as presents, and then spend time together reading and playing those games.** Research supports that reading and playing card and board games increases vocabulary, math skills, comprehension, and critical thinking skills.
16. **Recognize that gifted children need to question and respond critically.** They sometimes are impatient with conventions, such as spelling, grammar, rules, and even patience for others. Talk frankly about the importance of conventions without stifling their creativity and spirit.
17. **Maintain a sense of humor!** As a parent, every day we can choose to laugh or cry.
18. **Support school efforts to differentiate and provide services for advanced and gifted children.** Consider attending school in-service programs on differentiation and the needs of gifted children.
19. **As appropriate, supply home perspectives and feedback on your child's well-being, responses to learning, and interests.** No matter what our occupations, I have always believed that our children are our greatest work.
20. **Be an advocate more than an advisory.**

## REFERENCES

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- Silverman, L.K.(2004). *Counseling the gifted and talented*. Denver, CO: Love Publishing
- Silverman, Linda Kreger Silverman. Web site. <http://www.gifteddevelopment.com>
- \*Kingore, B. (2008). 20 Tips for nurturing gifted children. GIFTED EDUCATION COMMUNICATOR. California Association for the Gifted, Summer, 2008. In Press.



**HIGH ACHIEVER, GIFTED LEARNER, CREATIVE THINKER**

Dr. Bertie Kingore 2004

<b>A HIGH ACHIEVER...</b>	<b>A GIFTED LEARNER</b>	<b>A CREATIVE THINKER...</b>
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged.	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts.
Answers the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original and continually developing.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert, abstracting beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.